

up, he will certainly be succeeded by one who has every requisite for the position, in the prime of life and fame, of old blood, high rank, great fortune, and greater ability. Once in power, there is nothing to prevent him holding office as long as Sir Robert Walpole. Nobody can compete with Stanley. I heard him the other night in the Commons, when the party were all divided and breaking away from their ranks, recall them by the mere force of superior will and eloquence: he rose like a young eagle above them all, and kept hovering over their heads till they were reduced to abject submission. There is nothing like him. If you are going into politics and mean to stick to it, I daresay you will do very well, for you have ability and enterprise; and if you are careful how you steer, no doubt you will get into some port at last. But you must put all these foolish notions out of your head; they won't do at all. Stanley will be the next Prime Minister, you will see.<sup>31</sup>

There is a sequel to the story which is not so well known. Melbourne lived till near the close of 1848; and when, after the death of Lord George Beutinck and shortly before his own, he heard of Disraeli's approaching elevation to the leadership of the Tory party in the House of Commons, he exclaimed in some excitement, <sup>4</sup> 'By God! the fellow will do it yet.'

I have become this year [the diary resumes] very popular with the dandies. D'Orsay took a fancy to me, and they take their tone from him. Lady Blessington is their muse, and she declared violently in my favor. I am as popular with first-rate men as I am hated by the second-rate: D'Orsay, Massey Stanley, Talbot, Marquis of Worcester. Revived my acquaintance with Angerstein,<sup>2</sup> who thought I meant to cut him — an error! I am very blind.

What a happy or rather amusing society Henrietta<sup>8</sup> and myself commanded this year. What delicious little suppers after the Opera! Castlereagh ever gay, a constant attendant, and Ossulston, the pet of all the women, with his beautiful voice. What a singular character is Ossulston. He requires studying. Then we made it a point always to have some very pretty women, Charles Mathews ever there. Inimitable mime! His animal spirits are extraor-

<sup>1</sup> Torrens's *Life of Melbourne*, p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> His second, it will be remembered, in the affair with Lord Nugent.

» See below, p. 339.